

CITING REFERENCES

You will eventually notice that there are many ways to cite references within your writing, and professors can get into heated arguments about which style is appropriate. I believe that it doesn't really matter and you should just pick one method and be consistent about it. All the scientific journals outline their preferred reference styles in "Instructions to Authors". The examples I have included in this document were selected from the Journal of Bacteriology because it is a style with which I am familiar. Bear in mind, however, that it is only one suggestion, and if you need more information check with your instructor or the writing specialist.

You should also be aware that you have access to RefWorks via the library. RefWorks is bibliographical software that can automatically format references in a variety of styles. RefWorks is a reference database that you build by importing reference data. You can then you use this database to search a written document, find the references used, and RefWorks will automatically format them for you into a bibliography in a chosen format. There is a learning curve for it, so if you use references only once in a while or only a few of them at a time, it may just be easier to simply type them into the final document.

What gets referenced

Any time you refer to specific published information or describe some technical tool used in your work, you must cite it. The types of tools that need to be cited are specialized computer software (not MSWord or Excel), commercial kits for chemical analysis or isolating DNA, databases, and websites.

Informational citations pose a bit more of a problem because you have to differentiate between specific and general knowledge. General knowledge is information that is universally known. A universally known truth like the Earth being round doesn't require a citation. Specific information is usually highly specialized; however, it becomes harder to differentiate between general and specific knowledge as you approach the more modern scientific realm and you will encounter ambiguity. For example, I think it would be fairly safe to say that we generally accept that insulin controls blood sugar levels, but it is less well known the peptide ghrelin controls appetite. Therefore, the insulin statement would not need a reference but the ghrelin one would. So it becomes a bit of a challenge to figure this out.

A general rule that will probably help is that if you need to look something up in order to write about it or use it, you should be providing a citation for it.

Where it is referenced

We can divide references into two categories, those that are cited in a bibliography at the end of a paper, and those that are cited the main text.

References cited in the text. Unpublished data, personal communications (i.e. talking or email), computer software, databases, and websites (home pages) are cited within the main body of the text. Generally we include website URLs only for sites that provide scientific data rather than just product information. The citation for each reference is enclosed in parentheses and includes the authors or places to access the information. Examples are below.

... similar results (R. B. Layton and C. C. Weathers, unpublished data).

... system was used (J. L. McInerney, A. F. Holden, and P. N. Brighton, personal communication).

... available in the GenBank database (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/Genbank/index.html>).

... using ABC software (version 2.2; Department of Microbiology, State University [<http://www.stu.micro>]).

References cited in the bibliography. These references are generally printed materials including journal articles, books, book chapters, published meeting abstracts of conference proceedings, and letters. This also include on-line publications (n.b. these are not the same as a website). These references are cited by numbers enclosed in

parentheses. Because the format of the bibliography has the references listed alphabetically, the numbers in the text will not appear in numerical order

How it is referenced

The bibliography includes all of the cited published references arranged in alphabetical order by first author and year consecutively (letter by letter, ignoring spaces and punctuation). Provide the names of all the authors for each reference. Journal names are abbreviated in ways that you can usually figure out, but if not, there are lists of journal abbreviations you can consult online (The National Library of Medicine's Medline database uses the list at <ftp://nlmpubs.nlm.nih.gov/online/journals/ljiweb.pdf>).

Since the best way to explain how to format a reference is to provide examples, here are a set of examples for printed and online references. Online references must provide the same information that print references do, but some variation is allowed. For online journal articles, posting or revision dates may replace the year of publication, and a DOI¹ or URL may be provided in addition to or in lieu of volume and page numbers. NOTE: A posting or accession date is required for any online reference that is periodically updated or changed.

For a journal article - printed

Arendsen, A. F., M. Q. Solimar, and S. W. Ragsdale. 1999. Nitrate-dependent regulation of acetate biosynthesis and nitrate respiration by *Clostridium thermoaceticum*. *J. Bacteriol.* 181:1489-1495.

For a journal article - online

Smith, F. X., H. J. Merianos, A. T. Brunger, and D. M. Engelman. 2001. Polar residues drive association of polyleucine transmembrane helices. *Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 98:2250-2255. doi:10.1073/pnas.041593698.

Dionne, M. S., and D. S. Schneider. 2002. Screening the fruitfly immune system. *Genome Biol.* 3:REVIEWS1010. <http://genomebiology.com/2002/3/4/reviews/1010>.

For a published letter (including letters to editors)

Falagas, M. E., and S. K. Kasiakou. 2006. Use of international units when dosing colistin will help decrease confusion related to various formulations of the drug around the world. *Antimicrob. Agents Chemother.* 50:2274-2275. (Letter.)

For a book

Li, J.J. 2006. *Laughing Gas, Viagra, and Lipitor: The Human Stories Behind the Drugs We Use*. Oxford University Press, New York.

For a chapter in a book - printed

Forman, M. S., and A. Valsamakis. 2003. Specimen collection, transport, and processing: virology, p. 1227-1241. *In* P. R. Murray, E. J. Baron, M. A. Pfaller, J. H. Jorgensen, and R. H. Tenover (ed.), *Manual of clinical microbiology*, 8th ed. ASM Press, Washington, DC.

For a chapter in a book - online

Charlier, D., and N. Glansdorff. September 2004, posting date. Chapter 3.6.1.10, Biosynthesis of arginine and polyamines. *In* R. Curtiss III et al. (ed.), *EcoSal—Escherichia coli and Salmonella: cellular and molecular biology*. ASM Press, Washington, DC. <http://www.ecosal.org/ecosal/index.jsp>. {Note that each chapter has its own posting date.}

¹ A DOI is the Digital Object Identifier used to identify content objects in the digital environment. They are used to provide current information, including where objects (or information about them) can be found on the Internet. Information about a digital object may change over time, including where to find it, but its DOI name will not change.

For a meeting abstract published in a journal supplement

Garcia, C. O., S. Paira, R. Burgos, J. Molina, J. F. Molina, and C. Calvo. 1996. Detection of salmonella DNA in synovial membrane and synovial fluid from Latin American patients. *Arthritis Rheum.* 39(Suppl.):S185.

For a commercial kit manual

Stratagene. 2006. Yeast DNA isolation system: instruction manual. Stratagene, La Jolla, CA. {*Use the company name as the author if none is provided for a company publication.*}